

Listing of Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-37. (Cancelled)

- filed 10/11/03*
- A1* 38. (New) A method for joining substrates, said method comprising:
providing a first substrate having an upper surface and a lower surface and a second substrate having an upper surface and a lower surface;
positioning a continuous thermoplastic tape adjacent to said first substrate and said second substrate such that said tape is in operative communication with said upper and lower surfaces of said first substrate and with said upper and lower surfaces of said second substrate; and
forming a seam by bonding said tape to said upper and lower surfaces of said first substrate and to said upper and lower surfaces of said second substrate, wherein said bond between said tape and said substrates is an adhesive bond, a physical bond, or combinations thereof.
- A2* 39. (New) A method as defined in claim 38, further comprising heating at least a portion of said tape to a predetermined temperature.
- B3* 40. (New) A method as defined in claim 39, wherein said temperature is between about 10°C below and about 50°C above a thermal melting temperature of said at least a portion of said tape.
- A1* 41. (New) A method as defined in claim 38, further comprising subjecting at least a portion of said tape to pressure.

~~AS~~ 42. (New) A method as defined in claim 41, wherein said pressure is between about 40 pounds per square inch to about 120 pounds per square inch.

~~AS~~ 43. (New) A method as defined in claim 38, further comprising subjecting said tape to simultaneous heat and pressure.

~~AS~~ 44. (New) A method as defined in claim 38, wherein said first substrate and said second substrates are fabrics.

~~AS~~ 45. (New) A method as defined in claim 38, wherein at least a portion of said tape contains multiple layers.

~~AS~~ 46. (New) A method as defined in claim 45, wherein one of said layers contains a thermoplastic material having a first thermal melting temperature and another of said layers contains a thermoplastic material having a second thermal melting temperature, said second thermal melting temperature being greater than said first thermal melting temperature.

~~AS~~ 47. (New) A method as defined in claim 38, further comprising folding said tape into a certain shape.

~~AS~~ 48. (New) A method as defined in claim 47, wherein said tape is folded into a z-shaped configuration.

~~AS~~ 49. (New) A method as defined in claim 47, wherein said tape is folded prior to being positioned adjacent to said first substrate and said second substrate.

~~AS~~ 50. (New) A method as defined in claim 47, wherein said tape is folded after being positioned adjacent to said first substrate and said second substrate.

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~~54~~ 51. (New) A method as defined in claim 38, further comprising etching at least one of said surfaces of said first substrate, said second substrate, or combinations thereof.

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~~55~~ 52. (New) A method as defined in claim 38, wherein an edge defined by said upper and lower surfaces of at least one of said substrates is non-linear.

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~~56~~ 53. (New) A method as defined in claim 38, wherein said tape comprises polyurethane.

57 54. (New) A method for joining fabrics comprising:
providing a first fabric having an upper surface and a lower surface and a second fabric having an upper surface and a lower surface;

folding a continuous thermoplastic tape into a z-shaped configuration and positioning said tape adjacent to said first fabric and said second fabric such that said tape is in operative communication with said upper and lower surfaces of said first fabric and with said upper and lower surfaces of said second fabric; and

forming a seam by subjecting said tape to simultaneous heat and pressure, thereby bonding said tape to said upper and lower surfaces of said first fabric and to said upper and lower surfaces of said second fabric, wherein said bond between said tape and said fabrics is an adhesive bond, a physical bond, or combinations thereof.

58 55. (New) A method as defined in claim 54, wherein said tape comprises polyurethane.

59 56. (New) A method as defined in claim 54, wherein at least a portion of said tape contains multiple layers.

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(61) 57. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in claim 56, wherein one of said layers contains a thermoplastic material having a first thermal melting temperature and another of said layers contains a thermoplastic material having a second thermal melting temperature, said second thermal melting temperature being greater than said first thermal melting temperature.

(61) 58. (New) A method as defined in claim 57, wherein at least a portion of said tape is heated to a temperature between about 10°C below and about 50°C above a thermal melting temperature of said at least a portion of said tape.

(61) 59. (New) A method as defined in claim 54, wherein at least a portion of said tape is subjected to a pressure between about 40 pounds per square inch to about 120 pounds per square inch.

(63) 60. (New) An article comprising:
a first substrate having an upper surface and a lower surface and a second substrate having an upper surface and a lower surface; and
a seam defined by a continuous thermoplastic tape bonded to said upper and lower surfaces of said first ~~fabric~~^{substrate} and said upper and lower surfaces of said second ~~fabric~~^{substrate}, wherein said bond between said tape and said ~~fabric~~^{substrate} is an adhesive bond, a physical bond, or combinations thereof.

(61) 61. (New) An article as defined in claim 60, wherein said first and said second substrates are fabrics.

(63) 62. (New) An article as defined in claim 60, wherein an edge defined by said upper and lower surfaces of at least one of said substrates is non-linear.

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63. (New) An article as defined in claim 60, wherein at least one of said surfaces of said first substrate, said second substrate, or combinations thereof, is etched.

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64. (New) An article as defined in claim 60, wherein said tape comprises polyurethane.

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65. (New) An article as defined in claim 60, wherein at least a portion of said tape contains multiple layers.

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66. (New) An article as defined in claim 65, wherein one of said layers contains a thermoplastic material having a first thermal melting temperature and another of said layers contains a thermoplastic material having a second thermal melting temperature, said second thermal melting temperature being greater than said first thermal melting temperature.

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67. (New) An article as defined in claim 60, wherein said tape is folded into a z-shaped configuration.

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68. (New) An article comprising:
a first fabric having an upper surface and a lower surface and a second fabric having an upper surface and a lower surface; and
a seam defined by a continuous thermoplastic tape folded into a z-shaped configuration and bonded to said upper and lower surfaces of said first fabric and said upper and lower surfaces of said second fabric, wherein said bond between said tape and said fabric is an adhesive bond, a physical bond, or combinations thereof.

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69. (New) An article as defined in claim 68, wherein said tape comprises polyurethane.

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~~13~~ 70. (New) An article as defined in claim 66, wherein at least a portion of said tape contains multiple layers.

~~14~~ 71. (New) An article as defined in claim ~~70~~ 73, wherein one of said layers contains a thermoplastic material having a first thermal melting temperature and another of said layers contains a thermoplastic material having a second thermal melting temperature, said second thermal melting temperature being greater than said first thermal melting temperature.
